

Message Text

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20

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02

AID-05 OMB-01 /065 W

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R 241243Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2332

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 8286

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EC

SUBJECT: MUSICAL CHAIRS FOR POLITICALLY-LINKED PRISONERS

REF: QUITO 8219

1. THE GOE ANNOUNCED ON NOV. 22 THE RELEASE OF CENTRAL UNIVERSITY RECTOR CAMILO MENA. HE AND ONE OTHER UNIVERSITY DEAN HAD BEEN SENTENCED TO THREE DAYS' IMPRISONMENT FOR BEING THE "BRAINS" BEHIND RECENT CAMPESINO LAND INVASIONS IN CHIMBORAZO PROVINCE (REFTEL).

2. LOCAL NEWSPAPERS ON NOV. 23 REPORTED THAT THE ARRESTS OF JOSE VICENTE ORTUNO, LEOPOLDO CORDERO GODOY, AND FAUSTO ABAD ZUNIGA, HIGH-RANKING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MOVIMIENTO NACIONALISTA REVOLUCIONARIO (MNR), THE POLITICAL PARTY OF FORMER PRESIDENT CARLOS JULIO AROSEMENA. THEY WERE ACCUSED OF PARTICIPATING IN CLANDESTINE MEETINGS WITH THE INTENTION OF DISRUPTING THE RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT. A GOE SPOKESMAN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING "THE GOVERNMENT, FAITHFUL TO ITS DETERMINATION TO COMPLY WITH ITS OBLIGATION TO THE COUNTRY, IS NOT GOING TO PERMIT SUBVERSIVE ACTS THAT DISTURB THE CITIZENS' TRANQUILITY." AROSEMENA HAS STRONGLY PROTESTED THE ARRESTS OF THE TWO MEN.

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3. COMMENT: ORTUNO HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY ACCUSED OF COUP

PLOTTING AND WAS ARRESTED SHORTLY FOLLOWING THE ABORTIVE SEPT. 1, 1975 COUP ATTEMPT AGAINST THEN PRESIDENT GUILLERMO RODRIGUEZ LARA. HE WAS EXILED TO PARAGUAY IN OCT 1975, FROM WHERE HE DREW GOE IRE FOR MAKING PRESS DECLARATIONS AGAINST THE GOE, SAYING THAT THERE WAS STRONG COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE RODRIGUEZ GOVERNMENT.

4. WHILE LEOPOLDO CORDERO IS BEING HELD IN QUITO'S PRISON, ORTUNO HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN SENT TO GOE FACILITIES IN THE ORIENTE, A STEP USUALLY RESERVED FOR MORE SERIOUS POLITICAL OFFENDERS. THESE RECENT ARRESTS APPARENTLY INDICATE A NEW GOE HARD LINE AGAINST THOSE (AT LEAST CIVILIANS) WHO ARE INVOLVED IN WHAT THE GOVERNMENT REGARDS AS UNACCEPTABLE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. THE MNR IS ONE OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES THAT HAS REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE GOE PLAN FOR RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT.
BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

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